

**LECTIO DIVINA (Holy Reading)**  
**PRAYING WITH THE SACRED SCRIPTURES**  
**Sunday 14 June 2020**  
**Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ, Year A**  
**For those who pray the Liturgy of the Hours the Psalter takes Week Three**

This is by way of a reminder: The Liturgy of the Hours is available online. Whether you use *Universalis* or another app, you don't have to be concerned as to what week it is. It is all there for you.

Before beginning prayer with the Sacred Texts, let us take a look at the week ahead in Liturgy, the Australian Church and the Social Justice Calendar.

**In the Liturgy:**

19: Solemnity of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus.  
20: The Immaculate Heart of Mary (Patronal Feast for the Diocese of Wollongong). It is transferred to Sunday, and the Liturgy of the Word is for Sunday, not the feast. Elsewhere, this day is celebrated as a Memorial.

**In the Australian Church:**

15: Maitland Newcastle – Episcopal ordination of Bishop William Wright (2011)  
15: Perth – Episcopal Ordination of Archbishop Timothy Costelloe (2007)  
19: Brisbane – Episcopal Ordination of Archbishop Mark Coleridge (2002).  
19: Townsville: Anniversary of the Dedication of the Cathedral (2006).

**In the Social Justice Calendar:**

14: Beginning of Refugee Week.  
15: World Elder Abuse Day  
17: World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought.  
19: International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict.  
On this day in 1969: Affirmation by Arbitration Commission of the principle of equal pay for women performing equal work.  
20: World Refugee Day.

**LET US NOW MOVE INTO PRAYER WITH THE SACRED TEXTS**

**The readings are:**

Deuteronomy 8:2-3, 14-16  
1 Corinthians 10:16-17  
John 6:51-58

***Lectio:* Read the first reading from Deuteronomy, Ch. 8, v's 2-3 and 14-16.**

Read the sacred text slowly and prayerfully, really listening as you read aloud. This is about our on-going conversion.

***Meditatio:* Understanding the text so that we can immerse ourselves in it, and make our response to it.**

Remember! This is the exhortation of the first text. The exhortation is given by Moses: remember what the Lord did for you: (1) water from the hardest rock and (2) manna which “your ancestors had not known.”

Today in the Liturgy of Word and Eucharist, we stop to remember. What about the word “Eucharist”? What does it mean? Perhaps most of us quickly answer that it means “thanksgiving”. The word ‘Eucharist’ is formed from two Greek words, both of which (as well as the word ‘Eucharist’) are found in the New Testament. ‘eu’ means well, good, happily or rightly. Used as a pre-fix in front of ‘charis’ it takes on a different meaning. It implies a ‘rightness’ or a ‘right order’. It is in the right order of things to.....

Charis means grace or favour, or generosity (on the part of God), free gift, or free favour. If we put the two words together, we see that to simply say ‘eucharist’ means thanksgiving is limiting the meaning of this magnanimous word and its challenges for us in our daily lives.

Perhaps a better translation of Eucharist would be: A rightful act of thanks for Life given freely to each of us by Christ. In this context, it is both an act of remembrance, and act of worship, an act of faith and an act of gratitude for the gift of Life.

Looking at Eucharist in the Sacred Scriptures, there is:

The tradition of Matthew and Mark. (Matthew 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25), and the tradition of Luke and Paul (Luke 22:15-20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26).

And John? Chapter Six of John’s Gospel contains two homilies: verses 26-51a and 51b-59. Today’s Gospel takes verses from the second of the homilies: 51b-59.

Take time to ponder on this text from Deuteronomy with its exhortation to “remember”. In the days ahead, may we recall the Lord’s gift of life, given freely to us by Christ. May we make a conscious effort to remember. Allow the Holy Spirit to work on the fibres of your heart, and bring forth the melody of your response to this text. I share mine in *Evangelizatio* 1.

**Responsorial Psalm:** Psalm 147

**The response is:** PRAISE THE LORD JERUSALEM!

Psalm 147 is a prayer in praise of God’s personal care for Israel.

***Lectio:*** Read the second text from first Corinthians 10: 16-17

Sit with this text for a while and then read it again.

***Meditatio:***

Paul “begins this text by establishing common ground...the Corinthians accept the identification of the bread and wine of the Eucharist with Christ and with union or shared-union. In English, koinonia is so named, because it has two focuses: Christ and other believers. It is not about Christ and me. It is about Christ and us.

Verse 18 deepens the notion of “union”.

Israel is the illustration of the same type of phenomenon, as Paul evokes the Israelite sacrifice of communion in which the victim was divided between God (represented by the altar), the priest, and the one who is making the offering. The sharing was understood to create a bond between all involved. (These notes have been summarized from the New Jerome Biblical Commentary, 49:49).

Read the text again and allow the Holy Spirit to work on your heart. Listen to the Holy Spirit praying within you and prompting you to respond to words, phrases, sentences which call you forth and challenge you. I share my response in *Evangelizatio 2*.

**The Gospel Verse is from John 6:51-52**

I AM THE LIVING BREAD FROM HEAVEN, SAYS THE LORD;  
WHOEVER EATS THIS BREAD WILL LIVE FOREVER.

***Lectio:*** Read the Gospel text: 6:51-58.

***Meditatio:*** Some background to the text so that we understand it better and can then make our response.

John 6:51-58 is the second of two homilies which make up John's teaching on the Eucharist. The Johannine writer has Jesus going up into the hills, at the time of the Passover of the Jews. This suggests springtime and wildflowers.

Go back and read 6:10. "There was much grass in the place." It is good to feel the spring lushness.

Go back and read 6:35. It is an 'I AM' saying of John's Gospel.

"**I am** the Bread of Life." I am is personalized. The divine name. Read Exodus 3, as background to this Gospel text.

If one really believes in the I AM of Jesus, one can never be lost.

The other profound way of saying this is to understand that we are "held" by Jesus, as Jesus is "held" by the Father. The one coming to Jesus does not hunger.

The one believing in Jesus no longer thirsts after life – no longer desires life – one has it. One is held by Jesus. One is deeply involved in the mystery of being drawn...this is deeper than consciousness. (Cf. 6:44) 6:57 – I live because of the Father. Jesus is "held" by the Father.. "Those who eat my flesh will live because of me." We are "held" by Jesus.(6:35). This sharing on being "held" was part of a Scripture course we did in the Abbey with Fr. Kevin O'Shea, many years ago. He had a passion for John's Gospel, and passed his insights on to us.

Read the Gospel again take quiet time. Listen to the Holy Spirit playing like a harpist on the fibres of your heart, to bring forth the melody of your response. I share my response in *Evangelizatio 3*.

***EVANGELIZATIO:*** *My lived response to the texts with which the Church gives me each Sunday for my formation as a Christian.* St. James says, "Be doers of the Word." And the Book of Deuteronomy tells us that the Word of God is in our hands to do it.

1. I am responding to the first part of the gift God gave to his people on the journey to the Promised Land. He gave "water from the hardest rock. Water from the hardest rock is the purest water on planet earth. It is drinkable, fresh, healing. St. Ephrem the Syrian writes profoundly on the Mystery of the Eucharist: *Have ever before you the Face of the Lord, and*

*look upon his beauty, and let your earnest gaze turn nowhere away from his most sweet countenance. Go, my friends, go forward, and with all the love of our souls, follow Christ wherever he goes.* William Fredrickson on the Eucharist as the bond of love, says: *In the Eucharist the wounds of our spirit, of our community and world, are present to, and included in, the one death and resurrection of the Lord that transcends in mystery, time and space. Through the Eucharist, we of a specific time and locality, move in Jesus to the Father in surrender; in worship; and in Jesus we receive redemption and life.*

2. I am responding to the one loaf and the fact that we all have a share in this one loaf: there is only one body, but in order to live in love and stay with the harmony of love, we need to appreciate unity in diversity. We are all different. We all have gifts to share. This has been a special feature of Covid 19 – those with gifts of healing and gifts of comfort for the dying, where this is possible. And in the background, two giant nations are having a verbal war. A week ago, one leader held a bible up to accompany his words. This was followed by demonstrations on how to hold a bible. These games are better not watched. Perhaps, we could agree with Blessed Peter Julian Eymard, when he says: *The great sickness of the age is that it does not turn to Jesus Christ as its Saviour and to God. It abandons the sole foundation, the only law, the unique grace of salvation. It no longer relies on Jesus Christ or points towards him.*
3. I am responding to Fr. Kevin O'Shea's insight of being "held"! Jesus is held by the Father. We are held by Jesus. It is an intimate image which draws us closer and closer to Jesus. Recently my little girl, Madeleine McCann, for whom I have prayed since she was abducted, came on to the news again – a step closer to knowing if she is alive or dead. Kate and Gerry McCann have been helped through this by the love and prayer of family and friends. And so, they have been HELD. We who have prayed, have held them. And so, Jesus has held them. When in sorrow, what does it feel like to be held? It feels as though the other person is gentle, compassionate, caring and kind – and in solidarity with us.

*Lectio Divina is prayer with the Sacred Scriptures.  
We read, we seek to understand with the help of a commentary,  
we ponder, we take time for stillness and we respond.  
It is a way of life, not a method of prayer.  
Take the Mother of God as your model.*

